Fall 2006

Credit Hours: 3      Lab Hours: 0      Lecture Hours: 3

Class Times: 2:00-4:40 p.m.    Days: W    Room: PS 317

English 2080: Creative Writing – Introduction to Poetry (3 L, 3 CR)

“Analysis of the forms of poetry, and practice of writing poetry at the introductory and intermediate level. Prerequisite: ENGL 1020 or permission of instructor” (CC Catalog).

Required Materials

• good dictionary and thesaurus
• a journal
• a loose-leaf notebook
• a typewriter or word processor (or convenient daily access to one)

Classroom Methods

Classroom practices include discussion, in-class writing activities, and workshops.

Specific Objectives

• to enhance our understanding and appreciation of poetry and poets through critical and creative reading, writing, and discussion
• to experiment, weekly, with free verse
• to improve our ability to critique others’ poetry, as well as our own
• to thoughtfully and professionally explicate and respond to poetry
• to dramatically read and creatively visualize a poem on video

Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>journal</td>
<td>too valuable to tally</td>
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<tr>
<td>poetry portfolio – 12 typed poems (at least eight a min. of 15 lines each)</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>weekly typed poetry explication/response (min. one page each)</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>weekly “three things I learned from Boisseau and Wallace”</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
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<td>video poem</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>submission (min. 3 poems) to Expression by Dec. 13th</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100 PTS.</td>
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Journal

You are asked to keep a poetry journal on your person at all times, at work, at play,
at rest (yes, even in bed.) In other words, you should also bring this journal to each class. The journal is the place where you should write down

• every idea or image or word that captures your attention and may prove useful in a future poem
• every thought your teacher, your classmates, and Boisseau and Roberts share on poetry that might be worth revisiting someday
• early drafts of poems, including those you are asked to write as in-class exercises

I will not ask to see your journals, but I do insist that you keep one, and that you love and safeguard it.

**Weekly Workshop**

Since this is a writing workshop, you will be expected to submit an original poem each week to be workshopped by the entire class. Each Thursday, I will announce a theme for the following week’s poetry. The poem you submit for the workshop should be “prompted” by this theme. If the workshop poem contains fewer than 15 lines, you will need to submit a second poem. This second poem, on any subject, will not be workshopped and will be read only by me. **For each poem to be workshopped, please Xerox and distribute copies to the rest of the class the week prior to the workshop. Late submissions will not be workshopped.** When responding, in writing, to your classmates’ poems, refer to the poetry guidelines handout and to what you have learned through class discussions and Boisseau and Wallace’s text. Your responses should note words, lines, images or ideas that you particularly like, as well as explanations regarding what you would revise if this were your poem and why.

**Portfolio (12 polished poems)**

Your workshopped poems will be returned to you each week, along with classmates’ comments. At the end of the semester, you should **submit 12 of your best poems -- which should include at least 8 poems that are a minimum of 15 lines each.** Poems that have not been workshopped should only be included in the portfolio if the instructor has read and offered previous feedback. **Evaluation:** In addition to the preceding criteria, the poetry portfolio will be evaluated for how well each poem demonstrates an understanding of 1) the elements of poetry (see “Poetry Guidelines” handout), and 2) meaningful revision and professional presentation.

**Weekly Typed Poetry Explication and Response (10)**

Each week, you should submit a typed (one-page min.) explication and response to one of the poems included in the week’s assigned readings. To explicate is to explain a text to assist others in their understanding. In other words, you should offer an interpretation of the selected poem, stated in your own words but supported, as needed, by passages from the poem, itself. (Carefully review the documentation handout in regard to how to handle titles, author’s names, paraphrases, and direct quotes.) If multiple interpretations of the poem seem possible, you will want to acknowledge as much. To ensure a thorough explication, address the journalist’s heuristics: who, where, what, how, and why.

- Who is the speaker and who is s/he addressing? Who else appears in the poem?
- Where and when does the poem take place (setting)?
- What is the speaker saying (content)?
- How is the speaker saying it (language and tone)?
- And, most importantly, why?
In addition to the explication, you are asked to respond to the poem, to articulate 1) why you chose to comment on this poem, and 2) what it has to teach you that may be helpful in your own poetry. In other words, what draws you and, hopefully, others to this poem? Is it a particular image? Experience? Emotion? And what does the poem have to offer you as a student of poetry? Evaluation: The explications & responses will be evaluated on 1) development, 2) unity, 3) coherence, and 4) presentation.

Weekly “Three Things I Learned from B & W”
To ensure that we get the most out of the class text by Boisseau and Wallace, each week you are asked to write and share a paragraph that identifies the following:

• something you learned that will help you with your poetry
• something you learned that will help you speak intelligently about poetry
• something you learned that extends beyond the world of poetry and applies to life, in general

This is a weekly pass/fail assignment, based on thoughtful preparation and participation.

Video Poem
This assignment is a creative visual representation of a poem to be shared with the class. Similar to a music video, the video poem captures images to complement a reading of one of your workshopped poems. The video poem should be at least three minutes long. While professional film quality is not a requirement, I do expect some creativity and originality to the images you select as a backdrop to a dramatic personal reading. Evaluation: Your classmates will evaluate your video poem based on 1) the quality of the poem, and 2) a complementary and creative (but not necessarily technical) presentation.

Attendance and Participation
Your presence and participation are vital to meeting the objectives of this student-centered workshop. A missed class cannot be made up by merely visiting with a classmate or the instructor. A missed class equals a missed learning opportunity and ensures ill-preparedness for future classes, thereby jeopardizing your success and understating your potential.

Late Work
Unless prior arrangements have been made, no late work will be accepted. Poetry not submitted on time (at the beginning of class the week prior to a scheduled workshop) will not be workshopped. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates assigned on the syllabus or announced in class.

Course Workload
Because we only meet once a week, expect to commit to an “average” of six hours of reading and writing prior to each class. Get in the habit of spending an hour a day on this class. If this course seems to present too much of a challenge, please schedule a conference so that we can discuss options.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities
Students are to treat others in the class and their opinions with civility and respect, to avoid language or behavior that disrupts or dampens individual or classroom spirit. Please refer to the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code (in the CC Catalogue and the student handbook) concerning students’ rights and responsibilities.
When Help is Needed
Please drop by the office during office hours or schedule a conference at another mutually convenient time if you desire assistance over an assignment or have questions regarding any other facet of this class. If you desire immediate help and I’m unavailable, visit the folks in the Writing Center, CE 117.

Chain of Command
If you have a problem with this class, please visit first with me, your instructor, in order to solve the problem. If you are still not satisfied, please take your problem through the appropriate chain of command, starting with the department head, then the division chair, and lastly the vice president for academic affairs.

Disabilities
Anyone with a known or suspected disability that may prevent the fullest expression of abilities should please see me immediately. Accommodations are available through the office of student services.

Academic Dishonesty
Plagiarism is defined as failure to credit the source of borrowed information or ideas; failure to place another’s exact words within quotation marks; copying or buying someone else’s material or work and presenting it as your own; distorting or misrepresenting someone’s material or thoughts through a sloppy paraphrase or an incomplete direct quote; inaccurately presenting a source’s name or bibliographic information. If you have doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, see me before you submit questionable material. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in failure of the paper and this class.

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This syllabus and all assignments are subject to revision based upon an assessment of the needs, progress, and interests of the class. What appears next to each date should be completed prior to the beginning of class. Assigned materials should be carefully read and annotated (highlight main ideas and make notes to in the margins.)

Aug. 30 – Introductions and Expectations

Sept. 6 -  Chapters 1 and 2 (starting out)
  Workshop Theme: Imitation of “Ellie” & “You Can’t Write a Poem About –“

Sept. 13 -- Chapters 8 (metaphor)
  Workshop Theme: Varied Perspectives

Sept. 20 -- Chapter 3 (making the line)
  Workshop Theme: Eavesdropping

Sept. 27 – Chapter 4 (making the line II)
  Workshop Theme: Prose Transformed into Blank Verse
  (unrhymed iambic pentameter)
Oct. 4 -- Chapter 5 (sound)
   Workshop Theme: Hooked on Emotional Phonics

Oct. 11 -- Chapter 6 (subject matter)
   Workshop Theme: When Art Speaks

Oct. 19-21 – Attend Literary Conference and Book Festival

Oct. 25 -- Chapter 7 (tale, teller, and tone)
   Workshop Theme: Literary Conference

Nov. 1 -- Chapter 9 (beyond the rational)
   Workshop Theme: Potions

Nov. 8 -- Chapter 10 (finding the poem)
   Workshop Theme: Borrowed Poem

Nov. 15 -- Wallace, Chapter 11 (devising and revising)
   Workshop Theme: How-To

Nov. 22-24 – NO CLASS -- Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 29 --- Workshop Theme: Student Choice

Dec. 6 - Workshop Theme: Three Revisions
   Video Poem Due

Dec. 13 -- Portfolio Due
   Expression Magazine Submissions Due

Dec. 18-20 - Final Exams (t.b.a.)
   Public Reading???